

LEIGH HUNT'S LONDON JOURNAL.

TO ASSIST THE INQUIRING, ANIMATE THE STRUGGLING, AND SYMPATHIZE WITH ALL.

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PRICE THREE HALFPENCE.

THREE NEW BOOKS.

FRANCESCA CARRARA—'CHANCES AND CHANGES,'
AND 'THE RICHES OF CHAUCER.'

SWIFT advises a servant, when his master is going to find fault with him, to anticipate him by some ground of complaint, real or imaginary, of his own. This resource will not do for us gentry of the LONDON JOURNAL, who are all of us, whether masters or servants, inheritors of higher notions from books, and do not condescend to the excuses of those days. But it is a fine thing, when a man is obliged to make an excuse, and is at a loss for one equally consistent with the delicacies of all parties, to find a gentleman coming up, and making an excuse to him! Golden is the opportunity for showing oneself grateful and generous, and thereby hinting to the remaining party how proper it will be to accept the excuse we are about to make, and what honour they will do themselves by it.

Now thus writeth of us the most cordial and knowing 'Bristol Mercury,' on the appearance of our first volume,—and thus, with that admission of our merits to becoming in a modern editor, do we repeat what he writeth:—

"Among the greatest miseries of an editor may be reckoned the wish to accomplish some particular object which he is continually obliged to postpone, and then, by and by, like the thoughtless debtor who suffers a trifling amount to remain unpaid, he is astounded at the magnitude of the debt which has accumulated. In some such a position do we feel ourselves with our Readers. Week after week, since the publication of the LONDON JOURNAL, has it beguiled for us many a weary hour, and often, by its happy philosophy, have the harassing cares, which have dogged our steps all day, been fairly driven from the field, when we have been able at last to take up a good position for doing battle, snugly entrenched in our easy chair and slippers, our coffee and toast before us, and armed with an unread number of this JOURNAL. And week after week have we intended to direct our Readers to the source of so much pleasure; and lo! a goodly-sized volume has made its appearance, with its many pleasant reminiscences, to reproach us with our selfishness and neglect."

Now "week after week, since the publication" of 'Francesca Carrara'—

— "week after week, since the publication" of 'Chances and Changes'—

— "week after week, since the publication" of 'The Riches of Chaucer'—

have they interused their respective relishes amidst the amenities of our tea-table and the large luxury of our easy chair and slippers; and week after week have we intended to direct our Readers to the sources of so much pleasure, when lo! three volumes together here make their appearance to reproach us with scarcely yet having noticed one. Here are 'The Riches of Chaucer,' a very treasure and casket of all precious things to make our tea-table rich,—'Chances and Changes' as sweet and domestic, as a lady to make tea for us,—and 'Francesca Carrara' (how shall we say it?) as thorough a peppered devil of wilfulness and calamity as ever fair hand served up to vary our dulcitudes withal,—and to none of them have we yet returned thanks for their sweetness or pungency.

The truth is, we cannot get rid of a vile propensity we have for putting off notices of the things we wish

to notice most, for the purpose (as we think) of doing them the better justice; whereas the best justice is to notice them at once, briefly as we may be able, and not to stand committing their chances of sale (helped by the mere fact of notice) with the imaginary importance of our "long say." And the worst of it is, that we do this to the authors whose books have given us the greatest personal regard for them,—another vile trick of the egotism of approbation; as if the prodigious honour we do, to people in liking them, gave us a right to ill-use them, and to take liberties more trying than pleasant.

However, Miss Landon's book, with her fame and popularity, will have disposed of itself, long before anything is said by us on the subject. Our superfluous self-references, we fear (if she sees them), will only dispose her to add another chapter to the "vanities of all things." The 'Six Weeks on the Loire,' also, will have procured, we trust, a full though quieter passage along the public stream, for the fair authoress of 'Chances and Changes.' Mr Clarke has the greatest right to complain of us, because poetry, especially old poetry, does not make its way to public perusal, like novels. But to say the truth, we have yet another reason for the delay; and this is, that we have a quarrel to pick with all these three authors; and in one instance, it involves a renunciation of an error on our own part, which completes the hardship of this accumulated perplexity.

Mr Clarke, who has a genuine love for his author, struck with disgust at the gross notion which has prevailed in this country almost ever since Chaucer wrote, that he is little else but a writer of humorous and licentious tales, has gone to the extreme of giving us as much as possible of his gravity, and as little as possible of his levity; whereas, though it is out of the question to think of publishing much of what is rejected, he might have retained exquisite passages of drollery perfectly unexceptionable, and sunk a good deal of what is merely prosing and superfluous. We have also to express a doubt, whether Chaucer's versification is so invariably regular in its construction as Mr Clarke supposes; a doubt which we express with the less willingness, because we have done something in our day towards spreading the contrary notion. But we must own, it now appears to us, that although the divine old bard, generally speaking, is as correct in his prosody as he is instinctively melodious, his lines are now and then short, or superfluous, of a syllable or so, and his time marked only by quantity. We are the more inclined to this opinion, from some remarkable instances that have come before us of a like tendency in other good ears, even now living, when the demands of prosody are so much better understood. Here is a sample in Chaucer, from the very first page that we have opened at random,—

"The hand was knowen that the letter wrote,
And all the venom of this cursed deed,
But in what wise certainly I n'ot:—"

that is, "know not." Now on these two syllables, "what wise," the voice lingers by reason of their natural emphasis, and thus makes the two serve the purpose of three; for in this verse there is a syllable wanting. Mr Clarke, however, has made a present to the reading world, which they ought to seize with joy. He has put an end to the old bugbear of "difficulty," by modernizing the spelling of Chaucer,

without hurting the spirit of his poetry; and if it is to be regretted that he has put too gratuitous a faith in the far too gratuitous conclusions of Mr Godwin's otherwise valuable life of the poet, his fault in that respect, as in others, is still a fault of faith, and leaves him a character for *bonhomie*, not unbecoming a recommender of childlike and loving genius. The world is now twice indebted to Mr Clarke on the side of poetry: for he was one of the first teachers, and main encouragers, of the young genius of Mr Keats, of whom he has here recorded an interesting anecdote, accompanied by a sonnet which will be highly welcome to our poetical readers:—

"The poem of 'The Flower and the Leaf' was especially favoured by the young poet, John Keats. The author may perhaps be pardoned for making a short digression upon the present occasion, to record an anecdote in corroboration of the pleasure testified by that vivid intellect upon his first perusal of the composition. It happened at the period when Keats was about publishing his first little volume of poems (in the year 1817). He was then living in the second floor of a house in the Poultry, at the corner of the court leading to the Queen's Arms Tavern—that corner nearest to Bow Church. The author had called upon him here, and finding his young friend engaged, took possession of a sofa, and commenced reading from his then pocket-companion, Chaucer's 'Flower and the Leaf.' The fatigue of a long walk, however, prevailed over the fascination of the verses, and he fell asleep. Upon awaking, the book was still at his side; but the Reader may conceive the author's delight, upon finding the following elegant sonnet written in his book, at the close of the poem. During my sleep, Keats had read it for the first time; and, knowing that it would gratify me, had subjoined a testimony to its merit, that might have delighted Chaucer himself."

"SONNET UPON READING THE 'FLOWER AND THE LEAF.'

This pleasant tale is like a little copse
The honied lines so freshly interlace
To keep the reader in so sweet a place;
So that he here and there full-hearted stops;
And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops
Come cool and suddenly against his face:
And by the wand'ring melody may trace
Which way the tender-legged linnet hops.
Oh, what a charm hath white simplicity!
What mighty power hath this gentle story!—
I, that for ever feel athirst for glory,
Could at this moment be content to lie
Meekly upon the grass, as those whose sobbings
Were heard of none beside the mournful robin's."

February, 1817."

With Miss Landon our quarrel is far worse, and quite horrible, seeing it is with a lady; but why does she, whose poetry can live at will in such charming places of fancy, and floweriness, and lovingness, write a novel which is one continued, wilful wail over the "miseries of human life," making the very worst of what is bad, and refusing to make as much as she could, and even as the circumstances demand, of what is consolatory and prosperous? She has positively, after making all her loving people as anxious and unhappy as possible throughout the book, taken her hero and heroine the instant they are married, and

when they might have sat comfortably down by their fireside, and sent them to sea in a storm, for no reason whatsoever but to drown them, and say "You shan't be happy, though you might." Now there really are happy bridas in the world; all the people, who are married at St George's or St Mildred's, do not look about them for a ship in a storm to die in; and why should Miss Landon, therefore, have deprived us of this bit of sugar after our physic, and lumped such a very particular misery among her general calamities? *Cui bono?* The "Miseries of Human Life" are an old story, and are so apt to be overdone, that a modern wit has made a farce of them instead of a tragedy. We are not for denying their existence, but for doing our best to diminish them, and see fair play to those innumerable sources of pleasure which, in the riches of our spleen, and in our power to dispense with all pleasures, provided we do not see things go just as we like, we are so apt to look upon as nothing. The world is surely quite enough alive to what is unhappy in it, as far as regards the old grounds of unhappiness; at least no preaching up of despair will render them so to better purpose; and we do not see how the only comfort left them in such sermons, to wit, the superiority of the world to come, is much recommended by a system of lamentation and rebuke, so little complimentary to the creator of both. Might we suggest, then, to Miss Landon, that she is going farther than she intends, and perhaps adding to the discomfort she deplores, by encouraging a saturnine turn of mind in her readers? We have always heard, and we believe, that her heart is equal to her fancy, and that in private she is one of the most generous and disinterested of women; and why should she not be as generous in her books, and endeavour to increase that sense of pleasure which she thinks so small, rather than diminish it? Let her think of this, and do justice to the gifts heaven has bestowed on her, and not pretend there are no roses because there are thorns. Let her make us all love her so much, that our very gratitude shall force her to be cheerful whether she will or no.

As to the fair authoress of 'Chances and Changes,' who is one of the most acquiescent of human beings, and delights in drawing comfort out of the severest trials, we have less scruple in quarrelling with her, seeing she can turn everything to such good account; but why, in thinking us worthy of a quotation, must she needs select a passage which we regret to have written, and which originated in young and petulant want of proper reverence for a poet (Mr Wordsworth) to whom we afterwards made the *amende honorable*? And she reprobates it, too, as if we had not done so ourselves!—nay, as if we had not been one of the greatest trumpeters of his muse (then needing such servant-harbingers); so much so, that a late noble rival of his used to rank it among our offences, and merrily charge us with having given the town the wrong poetical faith. This is hard, though she does not mean it, and though she says everything in such a soft, good-natured voice, as in truth aggravates the hardship, and makes us sorrier that she has mistaken us. However, we have here supplied her with golden reason for doing us justice at some future opportunity, and mending her quotation, which she will do in the most acceptable manner by giving one on the same poet, to be found in another edition of the same verses, or even in the same edition; for we hailed him as the Prince of living Poets even then.

We beg pardon of the Reader for this personal digression; but there are sore points on which authors find it difficult not to speak when they can; and editorship furnisheth alarming facilities that way.

This novel, 'Chances and Changes,' is remarkable for its relish of domestic happiness, for a cheerful piety, and for an admirably drawn character of a man of the world, who tires out the affections of the heroine. The authoress, with true sense and right feeling, makes her marry another man, and become happy with him; for real love is real love, whether "first," or "second," and though first love be accompanied with a novelty which seldom loses its after-effect in the imagination, and is often mistaken for

something deeper, second love not seldom finds out that it ought to have been first, and that the first was no love at all.

'PHILOSOPHY OF HEALTH.'

[Concluded.]

"There is one effect resulting from the operation of the intellectual faculties on the senses that deserves particular attention. The higher faculties elevate the subordinate in such a manner as to make them altogether new endowments. In illustration of this, it will suffice to notice the change wrought as if in the very nature of sensation, the moment it becomes combined with an intellectual operation, as exemplified in the difference between the intellectual conception of beauty, and the mere perception of sense. The grouping of the hills that bound that magnificent valley, which I behold at this moment spread out before my view; the shadow of the trees at the base of some of them, stretching its deep and varied outline up the sides of others; the glancing light now brightening a hundred different hues of green on the broad meadows, and now dancing on the upland fallows; the ever-moving, ever-changing clouds; the scented air; the song of birds; the still more touching music which the breeze awakens in the scarcely trembling branches of those pine trees,—the elements of which this scene is composed, the mere objects of sense, the sun, the sky, the air, the hills, the woods, and the sounds poured out from them, impress the senses of the animals that graze in the midst of them; but on their senses they fall dull and without effect, exciting no perception of their loveliness, and giving no taste of the pleasures they are capable of affording. Nor even in the human being, whose intellectual faculties have been uncultivated, do they awaken either emotions or ideas. The clown sees them, hears them, feels them, no more than the herds he tends: yet in him whose mind has been cultivated and unfolded, how numerous and varied the impressions, how manifold the combinations, how exquisite the pleasure produced by objects such as these!"—Ch. iii, p. 87.

"But there are pleasures of another class, pleasures having no relation whatever to a person's own sensation or happiness, pleasures springing from the perception of the enjoyment of others. The sight of pleasure not its own affects the human heart, provided its state of feeling be natural and sound, just as it would be affected were it its own. Not more real is the pleasure arising from the gratification of appetite, the exercise of sense, and the operation of intellect, than that arising from the consciousness that another sentient being is happy. Pleasures of this class are called sympathetic, in contradistinction to those of the former class, which are termed selfish.

There are then two principles in continual operation in the human being, the selfish and the sympathetic. The selfish is productive of pleasure of a certain kind; the sympathetic is productive of another kind. The selfish is primary and essential; the sympathetic, arising out of the selfish, is superadded to it. And so, precisely, what the animal life is to the organic, the sympathetic principle is to the selfish; and just what the organic life gains by its union with the animal, the mental constitution gains by the addition of the sympathetic to the selfish affection. The analogy between the combination in both cases is in every respect complete. As the organic life produces and sustains the animal, so the sympathetic principle is produced and sustained by the selfish. As the organic life is conservative of the intire organization of the body, so the selfish principle is conservative of the intire being. As the animal life is superadded to the organic, extending, exalting, and perfecting it, so the sympathetic principle is superadded to the selfish, equally extending, exalting, and perfecting it. The animal life is nobler than the organic, whence the organic is subservient to the animal; but there is not only no opposition, hostility, or antagonism between them, but the strictest possible connexion, dependence, and subservience.

The sympathetic principle is nobler than the selfish, whence the selfish is subservient to the sympathetic; but there is not only no opposition, hostility, or antagonism between them, but the strictest possible connexion, dependence, and subservience. Whatever is conducive to the perfection of the organic, is equally conducive to the perfection of the animal life; and whatever is conducive to the attainment of the true end of the selfish, is equally conducive to the attainment of the true end of the sympathetic principle. The perfection of the animal life cannot be promoted at the expense of the organic, nor that of the organic at the expense of the animal; neither can the ultimate end of the selfish principle be secured by the sacrifice of the sympathetic, nor that of the sympathetic by the sacrifice of the selfish. Any attempt to exalt the animal life beyond what is compatible with the healthy state of the organic, instead of accomplishing that end, only produces bodily disease. Any attempt to extend the selfish principle beyond what is compatible with the perfection of the sympathetic, or the sympathetic beyond what is compatible with the perfection of the selfish, instead of accomplishing the end in view, only produces mental disease. Opposing and jarring actions, antagonizing and mutually destructive powers, are combined in no other work of nature; and it would be wonderful indeed, were the only instance of it found in man, the noblest of her works, and in the mind of man, the noblest part of her noblest work."—Ch. iii, p. 90.

"Deeply then," Dr Smith goes on, "are laid the fountains of happiness in the constitution of human nature. They spring from the depths of man's physical organization; and from the wider range of his mental constitution they flow in streams magnificent and glorious. It is conceivable that, from the first to the last moment of his existence, every human being might drink of them to the full extent of his capacity. Why does he not? The answer will be found in that to the following question. What must happen, before this be possible? The attainment of clear and just conceptions, on subjects in relation to which the knowledge hitherto acquired by the most enlightened man is imperfect. Physical nature, every department of it, at least, which is capable of influencing human existence, and human sensation; human nature, both the physical and the mental part of it; institutions so adapted to that nature as to be capable of securing to every individual, and to the whole community, the maximum of happiness with the minimum of suffering—this must be known."—Lib. iii, p. 102.

When will this be known? How long is man to wander in the dark, and having eyes, to see not? Our extracts shall be concluded with the exhortation that Dr Smith gives to one portion of the human race; that portion which is most in need of it, and which, could it be roused to a sense of what is wanting, would soon alter the condition of humanity.

"The bodily organization, and the mental powers of the child, depend mainly on the management of the infant; and the intellectual and moral aptitudes and qualities of the man have their origin in the predominant states of sensation, at a period far earlier in the history of the human race than is commonly imagined. The period of infancy is divided by physiologists into two epochs; the first, commencing from birth, extends to the seventh month; the second, commencing from the seventh month, extends to the end of the second year, at which time the period of infancy ceases, and that of childhood begins. The first epoch of infancy is remarkable for the rapidity of the development of the organs of the body: the processes of growth are in extreme activity; the formative predominates over the sentient life, the chief object of the action of the former being to prepare the apparatus of the latter. The second epoch of infancy is remarkable for the development of the perceptive powers. The physical organization of the brain, which still advances with rapidity, is now capable of a greater energy, and a wider range of function. Sensation

becomes more exact and varied; the intellectual faculties are in almost constant operation; speech commences, the sign, and to a certain extent, the cause of the growing strength of the mental powers; the capacity of voluntary locomotion is acquired, while passion, emotion, and affection come into play with such constancy and energy, as to exert over the whole economy of the now veritable and plastic creature a prodigious influence for good or evil. If it be, indeed, possible to make correct moral perception, feeling, and conduct, a part of human nature—as much a part of it as any sensation or propensity—if this be possible for every individual of the human race, without exception, to an extent which would render all more eminently and consistently virtuous than any are at present (and of the possibility of this, the conviction is the strongest in the acutest minds which have studied this subject the most profoundly), preparation for the accomplishment of this object must be commenced at this epoch. But if preparation for this object be really commenced, it implies on the part of those who engage in the undertaking, some degree of knowledge—knowledge of the physical and mental constitution of the individual to be influenced—knowledge of the mode in which circumstances must be so modified in adaptation to the nature of the individual being, as to produce upon it, with uniformity and certainty, a given result. The theory of human society, according to its present institutions, supposes that this knowledge is possessed by the mother; and it supposes, further, that this adaptation will actually take place in the domestic circle through her agency. Hence the presumed advantage of having the eye of the mother always upon the child; hence the apprehension of evil so general, I had almost said instinctive, whenever it is proposed to take the infant, for the purpose of systematic physical and mental discipline, from beyond the sphere of maternal influence. But society, which thus presumes that the mother will possess the power and the disposition to do this, what expedients has it devised to endow her with the former, and to secure the formation of the latter? I appeal to every woman whose eye may rest on these pages—I ask of you, what has ever been done for you to enable you to understand the physical and mental constitution of that human nature, the care of which is imposed upon you? In what part of the course of your education was instruction of this kind introduced? Over how large a portion of your education did it extend? Who were your teachers? What have you profited by their lessons? What progress have you made in the acquisition of the requisite information? Were you at this moment to undertake the guidance of a new-born infant to health, knowledge, goodness, and happiness, how would you set about the task? How would you regulate the influence of external agents upon its delicate, tender, and highly irritable organs, in such a manner as to obtain from them healthful stimulation, and avoid destructive excitement? What natural and moral objects would you select as the best adapted to exercise and develop its opening faculties? What feelings would you check, and what cherish? How would you excite aims? How would you supply motives? How would you avail yourself of pleasure as a final end, or as a means to some further end? And how would you deal with the no less formidable instrument of pain? What is the measure of your own physical, intellectual, and moral state, as specially fitting you for this office? What is the measure of your own self-control, without a large portion of which no human being ever yet exerted over the infant mind any considerable influence for good? There is no philosopher, however profound his knowledge—no instructor, however varied and extended his experience, who would not enter upon this task with an apprehension proportioned to his knowledge and experience; but knowledge, which men acquire only after years of study—habits, which are generated in men only—as the result of long-continued discipline, are expected to come to you spontaneously, to be born with you, to require on

your part no culture, and to need no sustaining influence.”—Introduction, p. 5.

And now we have but one request to make of the author. Beautiful and instructive as this volume is, it is introductory to matter which must be still more interesting. We have learned enough from it to know how much we want to learn, and we trust he will soon publish another. The power of communicating knowledge, such as this, is a talent that must not “lodge with him useless,” a talent that should make him count every day for lost, in which he has not done something towards the completion of his work.

ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE.

LXIII.—THE FAMOUS STORY OF THE FAMILIES OF CALAS AND SIRVEN.

[IN repeating a story of Catholic bigotry and cruelty, it is hardly necessary, in these times, to deprecate its application to the existing members of the Catholic faith. They partake of the general Christian amelioration of the age, and would be ashamed to do as their predecessors did. Bigotry, it is true, will still break out into overt acts of absurdity here and there, Protestant as well as Catholic; but, generally speaking, at least among all decently educated people (and it is not the fault of the uneducated that they remain so), it has outgrown its mistakes, and no longer confounds the exasperations of self-will with the ordinance of God. The following narrative is the ‘Lounger’s,’ and is coloured with the peculiarities of a by-gone generation and of his own character.]

JOHN CALAS was a reputable tradesman, or, as he was called in France, a merchant of the city of Thoulouse, in the eighteenth century. Himself, his wife, and five sons, had been born and educated in the Protestant religion, but Lewis, the second of his children, only a few months before the present narrative commences, renouncing the tenets he had professed, embraced the Catholic faith. It was supposed that the young man had been persuaded to this change by an old female servant, who had lived many years in the family, and by whom he had been originally nursed. His parents lamented this apostasy, but being remarkable for affection towards their offspring, it was not observed to diminish the kindness of their behaviour either to Lewis or the old domestic, as they were convinced, however erroneous the proceeding, that it originated from amiable motives and a benevolent mind. Their eldest son, Anthony, had been bred to the law, but found that his dissenting from the established religion of his country was an insuperable bar to his being admitted to practice. The disappointment was observed to have a strong effect on his mind and health; he became melancholy, peevish, and solitary, procured and perused many reprehensible books, and often repeated passages from them in defence of suicide.

In this state of things, Anthony received an accidental visit from an old schoolfellow, the son of Mr Lavoisse, an *avocat*, or, as we should term it, an attorney, of Thoulouse. Young Lavoisse having been absent for several weeks at Bourdeaux, on his return found that his father had been for several days at a little villa to which he occasionally retired, eight miles from the city. Having endeavoured to procure a horse at several places, without effect, as he was coming out of the stable-yard of one of the persons to whom he had applied, he met Anthony and his father, who congratulated him on his arrival, and hearing that none of his family were at home, invited him to pass his evening at their house, to which he agreed. Mrs Calas received Lavoisse, as the friend of her son, with great cordiality, and after sitting in conversation about half an hour, Anthony, being the general market-man of the family, was sent to purchase some cheese; soon after, Lavoisse went again to the keeper of a livery stable to see if any of his horses were returned, and to bespeak one for his use in the morning.

They both came back in a short time, and at seven

o'clock sat down to supper in a room up one pair of stairs; the company consisting of Calas, his wife, Anthony, Peter, one of his brothers, and Mr Lavoisse. Before the meal was concluded, Anthony, without any apparent reason, rose from table in an evident state of mental perturbation: this, as it was a circumstance that had often occurred since his indisposition, was not noticed; he passed into the kitchen, which was on the same floor, and being asked by the servant if he was cold, said to her, “Quite the contrary, I am in a burning heat;” he soon after went down stairs.

It ought to have been observed that the whole of the ground floor was occupied by the shop and a warehouse behind it, which were separated by folding doors. The party whom Anthony had quitted continued conversing till half-past nine, when Lavoisse took his leave, and Peter, who, fatigued by his attendance in the shop, had fallen asleep, was roused to attend him with a lantern. It is easier to conceive than describe their horror and astonishment on reaching the foot of the stairs; the first object that presented itself was the unhappy Anthony, stripped to his shirt, and hanging from a bar which he had laid across the top of the folding-doors, having half-opened them for that purpose. Their exclamation brought Mr Calas down stairs, who, the moment he saw what had taken place, rushed forward and raised the body in his arms, moved the rope by which it was suspended, and the bar fell down; for the two young men were so affected that they stood immovable as statues, and lost all presence of mind. The unhappy father, in an agony of grief, laid his son on the ground, and immediately sent Peter for Mr Lamoire, a surgeon in the neighbourhood, observing to him, “Let us, if we can, prevent this dishonourable accident being known; you need not say how your brother’s death took place.”

Lavoisse in the meantime ran up stairs, to prevent, if possible, Mrs Calas from knowing what had happened, but hearing the groans and outcries of her husband, and the old servant, it could not be prevented, and the presence of this unhappy mother added to the afflicting scene. The surgeon was not at home, but his pupil, Mr Grosse, immediately came; on examination he found that Anthony was quite dead, and when he removed his neckcloth, observing a dark mark made by the cord, immediately said he had been strangled. A crowd of people, attracted by curiosity and the cries of the family, had collected round the door, and hearing the surgeon’s words, immediately formed an opinion that the deceased was on the point of becoming a Catholic, and that his family, as Protestants, had strangled Anthony, to prevent his abjuring their communion.

The majority of the inhabitants of France being at that time violently prejudiced against the Calvinists, and more particularly the inhabitants of Thoulouse, who, for several years celebrated the massacre of St Bartholomew by anniversary processions, this vague suspicion was eagerly circulated, and with many absurd aggravations, pronounced an undeniable fact; a furious mob assembled, and to prevent Calas and his family from being torn to pieces, it was thought necessary to send for the intendant of the police and his assistants.

These peace-officers, instead of quieting the people, and entering into cool examination of facts, precipitately sided in opinion with the multitude, and the whole family, together with Lavoisse, was committed to prison, under circumstances of universal hatred and indignation.

The Franciscans and White Penitents, two religious societies, at that time, in Thoulouse, zealously inflamed the public irritation, and promulgated the report that Anthony,—who had never given the least indication of a change in his opinions,—was the next day to have become one of their fraternity; that he was strangled in order to prevent it, and that Lavoisse, on this and the other similar occasions, was generally executioner among the Calvinists. The corpse was publicly interred in St Stephens, accompanied by a long and pompous pro-

cession, a solemn service and funeral dirge; a tomb was raised to his memory in a conspicuous part of that church, and a real human skeleton was exhibited on the monument, holding in one hand a paper on which was written *ABJURATION OF HERESY*, and in the other a branch of the palm-tree as an emblem of martyrdom. In such a state of the public mind it was not probable that the affair would experience an impartial examination. The *Capitou*, one David, an ignorant but fierce bigot, insisted on the impossibility of a person's suspending himself across the folding-doors, and said that it was a common practice with Protestant parents to hang such of their children as wished to change their religion; the worthy magistrate, forgetting at the moment, or resolving not to remember, that Lewis Calas, another of the unfortunate prisoner's children, had actually become a Catholic, and so far from incurring the resentment of his father, had been lately settled by him in an advantageous business, and that the person who had been the chief instrument of his conversion was at that moment an inmate in the family, and treated with the most unremitting kindness. Le Borde, the presiding Judge, who knew and ought to have acted better, warmly espoused the popular opinion; he repeatedly inquired "if Anthony Calas had been seen to kneel at his father's feet before he strangled him?" but receiving no satisfactory answer, observed that the cries of the murdered martyr were heard at distant parts of the city; he added that "it was necessary to make an example of John Calas, for the edification of true believers, and the propagation of sound faith, as heretics had been of late more than usually bold and incorrigible."

I relate with concern, that in the eighteenth century, in a Christian country, and during the reign of a most Christian King, this unfortunate man, seventy years of age, and irreproachable in life, who was remarkable for parental affection, and had brought up a numerous family in credit and repute, was declared guilty of murdering his own child, a crime which collateral and other circumstances proved he had never committed, and sentenced to be broken on the wheel. This innocent prisoner in a few days was led forth to punishment, in a state of mind which excited general admiration.

Two honest Dominicans, Bourges and Caldegnes, who attended him, declared that they not only thought him innocent of the crime, but an uncommon example of Christian patience, fortitude, charity, and forbearance; they could not help remarking, that in his prayers he intreated the Almighty to pardon the errors of his enemies. These worthy fathers united in wishing that their last hours might be like his.

Calas endured the torture with unabated firmness, declaring the innocence of himself and family to the last; his son Peter was banished for life; the other persons, with a glaring inconsistency—for if one was guilty, all must have been so—were set at liberty.

This melancholy and disgraceful transaction, which took place in the year 1761, naturally attracted the notice and consideration of all well-disposed, humane, and liberal persons, particularly of Mr Voltaire, the advocate of toleration; who, like other advocates, was ultimately carried further in his reforming career than he originally expected or designed. But in rescuing the family of Calas from obloquy and disgrace, he was commended by all parties. His applications to men in power were so effectual, that the judicial proceedings were sent to Paris, and revised; Calas, and the whole of the family were declared innocent; the sentence was annulled, the Attorney-General of the province was directed to prosecute the infamous *Capitou*, David, and every possible satisfaction was made to the widow, Mr Lavoisier, and the survivors. But although everything that could be done was done, all could not call up from the grave the mangled corpse of the unhappy father, who, at the moment he was suffering unutterable distress of mind for a suicide child, was loaded with disgrace and chains, and committed to a loathsome dungeon, accused, tried, and condemned, as the executioner of his own offspring, suffered a

cruel death, and finally was insulted on the scaffold in his last agonies by the cruel David. "Wretch!" said this infernal monster, to the poor old man, while in a state of torture, "wretch! confess your crime. Behold the faggots which are to consume your body to ashes!"

The melancholy impressions made by this article would have been somewhat alleviated, had it been in the Editor's power to relate with truth, that the vile *Capitou*, a Franciscan, and two or three of the *White Penitents* had been hanged.

Where and when have I seen, and by what artist, a painting in which a group of persons are exhibited as contemplating a picture of the tragedy which forms the subject of my present article, and exemplifying its effect on different tempers and dispositions? *

The man of violent passions, with fury in his countenance, and an extended arm, is pouring forth execrations against the remorseless bigots; another gentleman of exquisite sensibility is silently wiping the tear from his cheek; a connoisseur seems to be admiring the painter's performance, without being apparently affected by the subject of it; and a jolly fellow, who appears to have understood and practised the pleasures of the table, sits unbusied before the picture, buried in fat, indolence, and stupidity.

Various have been the efforts of human wisdom to correct the excesses of intolerant superstition; in many instances, these efforts have been successful, but like a race-horse pushing for the goal, they have often been carried further than was intended.

The zealous, and perhaps at first, and before his passions are inflamed, the well-meaning Catholic, who would punish a man's body for the salvation of his soul, ultimately degenerates into the most cruel and bloody of all tyrannies—a tyranny over the mind. On the contrary, the liberal-minded man of feeling and philanthropy, unless guided by prudence and expediency, becomes a latitudinarian, and a sceptic, and would ultimately introduce the most irrational and unfeeling of all despotisms.

The following letter addressed to Mr Voltaire from the late Empress of Russia, during his spirited conduct in favour of the family of Calas, must have highly gratified that ingenious Frenchman:—

"SIR,—The brightness of the Northern star is a mere *Aurora Borealis*; but the private man, who is an advocate for the rights of nature, and a defender of oppressed innocence, will immortalize his name. You have attacked the great enemies of true religion and science; fanaticism, ignorance, and chicane: may your victory be complete.

"You desire some small relief for the family: I should be better pleased if my inclosed bill of exchange could pass unknown; nay, if you think my name, unharmonious as it is, may be of use to the cause, I leave it to your discretion.

"CATHERINE."

It is a melancholy truth, that while this disgraceful tragedy was performing, another instance of superstitious intolerance, and like this, ending in the death of two innocent persons, was exhibited in the same province, at Castres, little more than forty miles from Thoulouse.

Adjoining to that city, on a little farm which they owned and occupied themselves, lived the family of Sirven, consisting of the farmer, his wife, and three daughters, one of whom was married and pregnant; her husband by his employment being called to a distant province. Although of the Protestant religion, the youngest of his single daughters had been taken by force from her father's home, put into a convent, and told that she must conform to the Catholic faith, which was the only true religion. Finding the poor girl naturally attached to the tenets in which she had been educated, her instructors told her that it was the high road to hell, and insisting that it was necessary to punish the body to save the soul, they taught her their better catechism, whipt her severely, and shut her up in a solitary cell. In a few weeks, in consequence of their persevering in

* We think there is an engraving of it in Lavater, and that the original is by a French artist.—Ed.

what they called wholesome discipline, the poor creature lost her senses, and, escaping from her keepers, threw herself headlong into a well. It was immediately insisted on by the Catholics, and passed current, that her own family had destroyed her, it being an established rule with Protestants to murder everyone who is suspected of any inclination to the Catholic faith. The populace was inflamed, Sirven did not dare to make his appearance, and having heard of the transaction at Thoulouse, was anxious to avoid similar treatment, as his house had been twice attacked. Expecting to be torn to pieces, he took an opportunity when his infuriated enemies were retired to rest from their persecutions, to leave his house with his family. At the dead of night, on foot, in the severity of winter, and with a deep snow on the ground, they fled from their savage neighbours, and took the road to Switzerland, though scarcely knowing whither to go. To add to Sirven's afflictions, his daughter was delivered of a dead child during the journey, evidently killed by the over fatigue and horrors of its parent; urged forward by their remorseless hunters, the frantic mother could not be persuaded that her child was dead, and travelled on, closely embracing the clay-cold infant in her arms.

It is not easy to describe the exasperated fury of the zealots at Castres, when they found their intended victims had escaped; they reproached each other with not having kept a guard during the night; to prove what they wished to do, the whole family were burnt in effigy; a process was issued against Sirven, his goods seized, his property confiscated, and the memory of an industrious, harmless, and much injured family, loaded with infamy and reproach.

The fugitives, travelling by night, and concealing themselves in the day time, fortunately escaped the tigers, but did not consider themselves as safe till they reached Switzerland. In another respect they were not less fortunate; the benevolent friend and advocate of the family of Calas heard of Sirven's misfortunes, and powerfully interfered in their favour, but was shocked on being told that their cause should be reheard, and that possibly they might be pardoned; a virtuous, decent, innocent family reduced to beggary and ruin, with two individuals of it murdered, for so in fact it was, is told it may be pardoned. But the active benevolence of Voltaire did not rest satisfied with this answer, which seemed to be adding injury to insult. Mr De Beaumont, who nobly and successfully defended the Calas family, also strongly interested himself, and tardy justice ultimately took place.

CHARACTERS OF SHAKSPEARE'S PLAYS.

BY WILLIAM HAZLITT.

NO. XI.—CORIOLANUS.

SHAKSPEARE has in this play shown himself well versed in history and state-affairs. 'Coriolanus' is a store-house of political common-places. Any one who studies it may save himself the trouble of reading 'Burke's Reflections,' or 'Paine's Rights of Man,' or the Debates in both Houses of Parliament since the French Revolution or our own. The arguments for and against aristocracy or democracy, on the privileges of the few and the claims of the many, on liberty and slavery, power and the abuse of it, peace and war, are here very ably handled, with the spirit of a poet and the acuteness of a philosopher. Shakspeare himself seems to have had a leaning to the arbitrary side of the question, perhaps from some feeling of contempt for his own origin; and to have spared no occasion of baiting the rabble. What he says of them is very true: what he says of their betters is also very true, though he dwells less upon it. The cause of the people is indeed but little calculated as a subject for poetry: it admits of rhetoric, which goes into argument and explanation, but it presents no immediate or distinct images to the mind, "no jutting frieze, buttress, or coigne of vantage."

or poetry "to make its pendent bed and procreate cradle in." The language of poetry naturally falls in with the language of power. The imagination is an exaggerating and exclusive faculty: it takes from one thing to add to another: it accumulates circumstances together to give the greatest possible effect to a favourite object. The understanding is a dividing and measuring faculty: it judges of things, not according to their immediate impression on the mind, but according to their relations to one another. The one is a monopolizing faculty, which seeks the greatest quantity of present excitement by inequality and disproportion; the other is a distributive faculty, which seeks the greatest quantity of ultimate good, by justice and proportion. The one is an aristocratical, the other a republican principle. The principle of poetry is a very anti-levelling principle. It aims at effect, it exists by contrast. It admits of no medium. It is everything by excess. It rises above the ordinary standard of sufferings and crimes. It presents a dazzling appearance. It shows its head turretted, crowned and crested. Its front is gilt and blood-stained. Before it "it carries noise, and behind it tears." It has its altars and its victims, sacrifices, human sacrifices. Kings, priests, nobles, are its train-bearers, tyrants and slaves its executioners.—"Carnage is its daughter."—Poetry is right-royal.* It puts the individual for the species, the one above the infinite many, might before right. A lion hunting a flock of sheep or a herd of wild asses is a more poetical object than they; and we even take part with the lordly beast, because our vanity or some other feeling makes us disposed to place ourselves in the situation of the strongest party. So we feel some concern for the poor citizens of Rome when they meet together to compare their wants and grievances, till Coriolanus comes in and with blows and big words drives this set of "poor rats," this rascal scum, to their homes and beggary before him. There is nothing heroical in a multitude of miserable rogues not wishing to be starved, or complaining that they are like to be so: but when a single man comes forward to brave their cries and to make them submit to the last indignities, from mere pride and self-will, our admiration of his prowess is immediately converted into contempt for their pusillanimity. The insolence of power is stronger than the plea of necessity. The tame submission to usurped authority or even the natural resistance to it has nothing to excite or flatter the imagination: it is the assumption of a right to insult or oppress others that carries an imposing air of superiority with it. We had rather be the oppressor than the oppressed. The love of power in ourselves and the admiration of it in others are both natural to man: the one makes him a tyrant, the other a slave. Wrong dressed out in pride, pomp, and circumstance has more attraction than abstract right.—Coriolanus complains of the fickleness of the people: yet the instant he cannot gratify his pride and obstinacy at their expense, he turns his arms against his country. If his country was not worth defending, why did he build his pride on its defence? He is a conqueror and a hero; he conquers other countries, and makes this a plea for enslaving his own; and when he is prevented from doing so, he leagues with its enemies to destroy his country. He rates the people "as if he were a God to punish, and not a man of their infirmity." He scoffs at one of their tribunes for maintaining their rights and franchises: "Mark you his absolute shall?" not marking his own absolute will to take everything from them, his impatience of the slightest opposition to his own pretensions being in proportion to their arrogance and absurdity. If the great and powerful had the beneficence and wisdom of Gods, then all this would have been well: if with a greater knowledge of what is good for the people they had as great a care for their interest as they

have themselves, if they were seated above the world, sympathising with the welfare, but not feeling the passions of men, receiving neither good nor hurt from them, but bestowing their benefits as free gifts on them, they might then rule over them like another Providence. But this is not the case. Coriolanus is unwilling that the senate should show their "cares" for the people, lest their "cares" should be construed into "fears," to the subversion of all due authority; and he is no sooner disappointed in his schemes to deprive the people not only of the cares of the state, but of all power to redress themselves, than Volumnia is made madly to exclaim,—

"Now the red pestilence strikes all trades in Rome,
And occupations perish."

This is but natural: it is but natural for a mother to have more regard for her son than for a whole city; but then the city should be left to take some care of itself. The care of the state cannot, we here see, be safely entrusted to maternal affection, or to the domestic charities of high life. The great have private feelings of their own, to which the interests of humanity and justice must courtesy. Their interests are so far from being the same as those of the community, that they are in direct and necessary opposition to them; their power is at the expense of our weakness; their riches of our poverty; their pride of our degradation; their splendour of our wretchedness; their tyranny of our servitude. If they had the superior knowledge ascribed to them (which they have not) it would only render them so much more formidable; and from Gods would convert them into Devils. The whole dramatic moral of 'Coriolanus' is that those who have little shall have less, and that those who have much shall take all that others have left. The people are poor; therefore they ought to be starved. They are slaves; therefore they ought to be beaten. They work hard; therefore they ought to be treated like beasts of burden. They are ignorant; therefore they ought not to be allowed to feel that they want food, or clothing, or rest, that they are enslaved, oppressed, and miserable. This is the logic of the imagination and the passions, which seeks to aggrandise what exalts admiration and to heap contempt on misery, to raise power into tyranny, and to make tyranny absolute; to thrust down that which is low still lower, and to make wretches desperate; to exalt magistrates into kings, kings into gods; to degrade subjects to the rank of slaves, and slaves to the condition of brutes. The history of mankind is a romance, a mask, a tragedy, constructed upon the principles of poetical justice; it is a noble or royal hunt, in which what is sport to the few is death to the many, and in which the spectators halloo and encourage the strong to set upon the weak, and cry havoc in the chase, though they do not share in the spoil. We may depend upon it that what men delight to read in books, they will put in practice in reality.

One of the most natural traits in this play is the difference of the interest taken in the success of Coriolanus by his wife and mother. The one is only anxious for his honour; the other is fearful for his life:—

"VOLUMNIA. Methinks I hither hear your husband's drum:—"

I see him pluck Aufidius down by th' hair:
Methinks I see him stamp thus—and call thus—
Come on, ye cowards; ye were got in fear
Though you were born in Rome; his bloody brow
With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes
Like to a harvest man, that's task'd to mow
Or all or lose his hire.

VIRGILIA. His bloody brow! Oh Jupiter, no blood!

VOLUMNIA. Away, you fool; it more becomes a man

Than gilt his trophy. The breast of Hecuba,
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier
Than Hector's forehead, when it spit forth blood
At Grecian swords contending."

When she hears the trumpets that proclaim her

son's return, she says in the true spirit of a Roman matron,—

"These are the ushers of Marcius: before him
He carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears.
Death, that dark spirit, in's nervy arm doth lie,
Which being advanc'd, declines, and then men die."

Coriolanus himself is a complete character: his love of reputation, his contempt of popular opinion, his pride and modesty are consequences of each other. His pride consists in the inflexible sternness of his will: his love of glory is a determined desire to bear down all opposition, and to extort the admiration both of friends and foes. His contempt for popular favour, his unwillingness to hear his own praises, spring from the same source. He cannot contradict the praises that are bestowed upon him; therefore he is impatient at hearing them. He would enforce the good opinion of others by his actions, but does not want their acknowledgments in words.

"Pray now, no more: my mother,
Who has a charter to extol her blood,
When she does praise me, grieves me."

His magnanimity is of the same kind. He admires in an enemy that courage which he honours in himself: he places himself on the hearth of Aufidius with the same confidence that he would have met him in the field, and feels that by putting himself in his power, he takes from him all temptation for using it against him.

In the title-page of 'Coriolanus,' it is said at the bottom of the *Dramatis Personæ*, "The whole history exactly followed, and many of the principal speeches copied from the life of Coriolanus in Plutarch." It will be interesting to our readers to see how far this is the case. Two of the principal scenes, those between Coriolanus and Aufidius and between Coriolanus and his mother, are thus given in Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, 1579. The first is as follows:—

"It was even twilight when he entered the city of Antium, and many people met him in the streets, but no man knew him. So he went directly to Tullus Aufidius' house, and when he came thither, he got him up straight to the chimney-hearth, and sat him down, and spake not a word to any man, his face all muffled over. They of the house spying him, wondered what he should be, and yet they durst not bid him rise. For ill-favouredly muffled and disguised as he was, yet there appeared a certain majesty in his countenance and in his silence: whereupon they went to Tullus, who was at supper, to tell him of the strange disguising of this man. Tullus rose presently from the board, and coming towards him, asked him what he was, and wherefore he came. Then Marcius unmuffled himself, and after he had paused awhile, making no answer, he said unto himself, If thou knowest me not yet, Tullus, and seeing me, dost not perhaps believe me to be the man I am indeed, I must of necessity discover myself to be that I am. 'I am Caius Marcius, who hath done to thyself particularly, and to all the Volscs generally, great hurt and mischief, which I cannot deny for my surname of Coriolanus that I bear. For I never had other benefit nor recompence of the true and painful service I have done, and the extreme dangers I have been in, but this only surname: a good memory and witness of the malice and displeasure thou shouldest bear me. Indeed the name only remaineth with me; for the rest, the envy and cruelty of the people of Rome have taken from me, by the sufferance of the dastardly nobility and magistrates, who have forsaken me, and let me be banished by the people. This extremity hath now driven me to come as a poor suitor, to take thy chimney-hearth, not of any hope I have to save my life thereby. For if I had feared death, I would not have come hither to put myself in hazard: but pricked forward with desire to be revenged of them that thus have banished me, which now I do begin, in putting my person into the hands of their enemies. Wherefore if thou hast any heart to be wrecked of the injuries thy enemies

* In the name of the many free spirits among the Greek poets,—in the name of the independent men and great poets, Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Chaucer, Milton, and many of a later day, whose memories we will not make blush by prematurely naming them with the others, we protest against this doctrine. It is an effusion of eloquent spleen; and that is all.—ED.

have done thee, speed thee now, and let my misery serve thy turn, and so use it as my service may be a benefit to the Volsces: promising thee, that I will fight with better good will for all you, than I did when I was against you, knowing that they fight more valiantly who know the force of the enemy, than such as have never proved it. And if it be so that thou dare not, and that thou art weary to prove fortune any more, then am I also weary to live any longer. And it were no wisdom in thee to save the life of him who hath been heretofore thy mortal enemy, and whose service now can nothing help, nor pleasure thee. Tullus hearing what he said, was a marvellous glad man, and taking him by the hand, he said unto him: 'Stand up, O Marcius, and be of good cheer, for in proffering thyself unto us, thou doest us great honour: and by this means thou mayest hope also of greater things at all the Volsces' hands.' So he feasted him for that time, and entertained him in the honourablest manner he could, talking with him of no other matter at that present: but within few days after, they fell to consultation together in what sort they should begin their wars."

The meeting between Coriolanus and his mother is also nearly the same as in the play.

"Now was Marcius set then in the chair of state, with all the honours of a general, and when he had spied the women coming afar off, he marvelled what the matter meant: but afterwards knowing his wife which came foremost, he determined at the first to persist in his obstinate and inflexible rancour. But overcome in the end with natural affection, and being altogether altered to see them, his heart would not serve him to tarry their coming to his chair, but coming down in haste he went to meet them, and first kissed his mother, and embraced her a pretty while, then his wife and little children. And nature so wrought with him, that the tears fell from his eyes, and he could not keep himself from making much of them, but yielded to the affection of his blood, as if he had been violently carried with the fury of a most swift-running stream. After he had thus lovingly received them, and perceiving that his mother Volumnia would begin to speak to him, he called the chiefest of the council of the Volsces to hear what she would say. Then she spake in this sort: 'If we held our peace, my son, and determined not to speak, the state of our poor bodies, and present sight of our raiment, would easily betray to thee what life we have led at home, since thy exile and abode abroad; but think now with thyself, how much more unfortunate than all the women living, we are come hither, considering that the sight which should be most pleasant to all others to behold, spiteful fortune had made most fearful to us: making myself to see my son, and my daughter here her husband, besieging the walls of his native country: so as that which is only comfort to all others in their adversity and misery, to pay unto the Gods, and to call to them for aid, is the only thing which plungeth us into most deep perplexity. For we cannot, alas, together pray, both for victory to our country, and for safety of thy life also: but a world of grievous curses, yea more than any mortal enemy can heap upon us, are forcibly wrapped up in our prayers. For the bitter sop of most hard choice is offered thy wife and children, to forego one of the two: either to lose the person of thyself, or the nurse of their native country. For myself, my son, I am determined not to tarry till fortune in my lifetime do make an end of this war. For if I cannot persuade thee rather to do good unto both parties, than to overthrow and destroy the one, preferring love and nature before the malice and calamity of wars, thou shalt see, my son, and trust unto it, thou shalt no sooner march forward to assault thy country, but thy foot shall tread upon thy mother's womb, that brought thee first into this world. And I may not defer to see the day, either that my son be led prisoner in triumph by his natural countrymen, or that he himself do triumph of them, and of his natural country. For if it were so, that my request tended to save thy country in destroying the Volsces, I must confess,

thou wouldest hardly and doubtfully resolve on that. For as to destroy thy natural country, it is altogether unmeet and unlawful, so were it not just and less honourable to betray those that put their trust in thee. But my only demand consisteth, to make a good delivery of all evils, which delivereth equal benefit and safety, both to the one and the other, but most honourable for the Volsces. For it shall appear, that having victory in their hands, they have of special favour granted us singular graces, peace and amity, albeit themselves have no less part of both than we. Of which good, if so it came to pass, thyself is the only author, and so hast thou the only honour. But if it fail, and fall out contrary, thyself alone deservedly shalt carry the shameful reproach and burthen of either party. So, though the end of war be uncertain, yet this notwithstanding is most certain, that if it be thy chance to conquer, this benefit shalt thou reap of thy goodly conquest, to be chronicled the plague and destroyer of thy country. And if fortune overthrow thee, then the world will say, that through desire to revenge thy private injuries, thou hast for ever undone thy good friends, who did most lovingly and courteously receive thee.' Marcius gave good ear unto his mother's words, without interrupting her speech at all, and after she had said what she would, he held his peace a pretty while, and answered not a word. Hereupon she began again to speak unto him, and said: 'My son, why dost thou not answer me? Dost thou think it good altogether to give place unto thy choler and desire of revenge, and thinkest thou it not honesty for thee to grant thy mother's request in so weighty a cause? Dost thou take it honourable for a nobleman, to remember the wrongs and injuries done him, and dost not in like case think it an honest nobleman's part to be thankful for the goodness that parents do show to their children, acknowledging the duty and reverence they ought to bear unto them? No man living is more bound to show himself thankful in all parts and respects than thyself; who so universally shewest all ingratitude. Moreover, my son, thou hast sorely taken of thy country, exacting grievous payments upon them, in revenge of the injuries offered thee; besides thou hast not hitherto showed thy poor mother any courtesy. And therefore it is not only honest, but due unto me, that without compulsion I should obtain my so just and reasonable request of thee. But since by reason I cannot persuade thee to it, to what purpose do I defer my last hope?' And with these words herself, his wife and children fell down upon their knees before him: Marcius seeing that, could refrain no longer, but went straight and lifted her up, crying out, 'Oh mother, what have you done to me?' And holding her hard by the right hand, 'Oh mother,' said he, 'you have won a happy victory for your country, but mortal and unhappy for your son: for I see myself vanquished by you alone.' These words being spoken openly, he spake a little apart with his mother and wife, and then let them return again to Rome, for so they did request him; and so remaining in the camp that night, the next morning he dislodged, and marched homeward unto the Volsces' country again."

Shakspeare has, in giving a dramatic form to this passage, adhered very closely and properly to the text. He did not think it necessary to improve upon the truth of nature. Several of the scenes in 'Julius Cæsar,' particularly Portia's appeal to the confidence of her husband by showing him the wound she had given herself, and the appearance of the ghost of Cæsar to Brutus, are, in like manner, taken from the history.

SECRETS OF COMFORT.

Though sometimes small evils, like invisible insects, inflict pain, and a single hair may stop a vast machine, yet, the chief secret of comfort lies in not suffering trifles to vex one, and in prudently cultivating an under-growth of small pleasures, since very few great ones, alas! are let on long leases.—*Sharp's Essays.*

SPECIMENS OF WIT, HUMOUR, AND CRITICISM OF CHARLES LAMB.

No. III.

BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE.

I do not know a pleasure more affecting than to range at will over the deserted apartments of some fine old family mansion. The traces of extinct grandeur admit of a better passion than envy: and contemplations on the great and good, whom we fancy in succession to have been its inhabitants, weave for us illusions, incompatible with the bustle of modern occupancy, and vanities of foolish present aristocracy. The same difference of feeling, I think, attends us between entering an empty and a crowded church. In the latter it is chance but some present human frailty—an act of inattention on the part of some of the auditory—or a trait of affectation, or worse, vain glory, on that of the preacher—puts us by our best thoughts, disharmonising the place and the occasion. But wouldst thou know the beauty of holiness?—go alone on some week-day, borrowing the keys of good Master Sexton, traverse the cool aisles of some country church: think of the piety that has kneeled there—the congregations, old and young, that have found consolation there—the meek pastor—the docile parishioner. With no disturbing emotions, no cross conflicting comparisons, drink in the tranquillity of the place, till thou thyself become as fixed and motionless as the marble effigies that kneel and weep around thee.

Journeying northward lately, I could not resist going some few miles out of my road to look upon the remains of an old great house with which I had been impressed in this way in infancy. I was apprised that the owner of it had lately pulled it down; still I had a vague notion that it could not all have perished, that so much solidity with magnificence could not have been crushed all at once into the mere dust and rubbish which I found it.

The work of ruin had proceeded with a swift hand indeed, and the demolition of a few weeks had reduced it to—an antiquity.

I was astonished at the indistinction of everything. Where had stood the great gates? What bounded the court-yard? Whereabout did the out-houses commence? a few bricks only lay as representatives of that which was so stately and so spacious.

Death does not shrink up his human victim at this rate. The burnt ashes of a man weigh more in their proportion.

Had I seen these brick-and-mortar knaves at their process of destruction, at the plucking of every pannel I should have felt the varlets at my heart. I should have cried out to them to spare a plank at least out of the cheerful store-room, in whose hot window-seat I used to sit and read Cowley, with the grass-plat before, and the hum and flappings of that one solitary wasp, that ever haunted it about me—it is in mine ears now, as oft as summer returns; or a pannel of the yellow room.

Why, every plank and pannel of that house for me had magic in it. The tapestried bed-rooms—tapestry so much better than painting—not adorning merely, but peopling the wainscots—at which childhood ever and anon would steal a look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those stern bright visages, staring reciprocally—all Ovid on the walls, in colours vider than his descriptions. Acteon in mid sprout, with the unappeasable prudery of Diana; and the still more provoking, and almost culinary coolness of Dan Phœbus, eel-fashion, deliberately divesting of Marsyas.

Then, that haunted room—in which old Mrs Battle died—whereinto I have crept, but always in the day-time, with a passion of fear; and a sneaking curiosity, terror-tainted, to hold communion with the past.—How shall they build it up again?

It was an old deserted place, yet not so long deserted but that traces of the splendour of past inmates were everywhere apparent. Its furniture was still standing—even to the tarnished gilt leather battle-dresses and crumbling feathers of shuttlecocks in the nursery, which told that children had once played there—but I was a lonely child, and had the range at will of every apartment, knew every nook and corner, wondered and worshipped everywhere.

The solitude of childhood is not so much the mother of thought, as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those years, that, though there lay—I shams to say how few rods distant from the mansion—half hid by trees, what I judged some romantic lake, such was the spell which bound me to the house, and such my carefulness not to pass its strict and proper precincts, that the idle waters lay unexplored for me; and not till late in life, curiosity prevailing over elder devotion, I found, to my astonishment, a pretty brawling brook had been the *Lacus Incognitus* of my infancy. Variegated views, extensive prospects—and those at no great distance from the house—I was told of such—what were they to me, being out of the boundaries of my Eden?—So far from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, methought, still closer the fences of my chosen prison; and have been hemmed in by a yet securer cincture of those excluding garden walls. I could have exclaimed with that garden-loving poet—

"Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines;
Curl me about, ye gadding vines;
And oh so close your circles lace,
That I may never leave this place;
But, lest your fetters prove too weak,
Ere I your silken bondage break,
Do you, O brambles, chain me too,
And, courteous briars, nail me through."

I was here as in a lonely temple. Snug firesides—the low-built roof—parlours ten feet by ten—frugal boards, and all the homeliness of home—these were the condition of my birth—the wholesome soil which I was planted in. Yet, without impeachment to their tenderest lessons, I am not sorry to have had glances of something beyond; and to have taken, if but a peep, in childhood, at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune.

To have the feeling of gentility, it is not necessary to have been born gentle. The pride of ancestry may be had on cheaper terms than to be obliged to an importunate race of ancestors; and the coatless antiquary in his unemblazoned cell, revolving the long line of a Mowbray's or De Clifford's pedigree, at those sounding names may warm himself into as gay a vanity as those who do inherit them. The claims of birth are ideal merely, and what herald shall go about to strip me of an idea? Is it trenchant to their swords? can it be hacked off as a spur can? or torn away like a tarnished garter?

What, else, were the families of the great to us? what pleasure should we take in their tedious genealogies, or their capitulatory brass monuments? What to us the uninterrupted current of their bloods, if our own did not answer within us to a cognate and correspondent elevation?

Or wherefore, else, O tattered and diminished 'Scutcheon that hung upon the time-worn walls of thy princely stairs, BLAKESMOOR! have I in childhood so oft stood poring upon thy mystic characters—thy emblematic supporters, with their prophetic "Resurgam"—till, every dreg of peasantry purging off, I received into myself Very Gentility? Thou wert first in my morning eyes; and of nights hast detained my steps from bedward, till it was but a step from gazing at thee to dreaming on thee.

This is the only true gentry by adoption; the veritable change of blood, and not, as empirics have fabled, by transfusion.

Who it was by dying that had earned the splendid trophy, I know not; I inquired not; but its fading rags, and colours cobweb-stained, told that its subject was of two centuries back.

And what if my ancestor at that date was some *Dametas*—feeding flocks, not his own, upon the hills of Lincoln—did I in less earnest vindicate to myself the family trappings of this once proud *Ægon*?—repaying by a backward triumph the insults he might possibly have heaped in his life-time upon my poor pastoral progenitor.

If it were presumption so to speculate, the present owners of the mansion had least reason to complain. They had long forsaken the old house of their fathers for a newer trifle; and I was left to appropriate to myself what images I could pick up to raise my fancy, or to soothe my vanity.

I was the true descendant of those old W—s; and not the present family of that name, who had fled the old waste places.

Mine was that gallery of good old family portraits, which, as I have gone over, giving them in fancy my own family name, one—and then another—would seem to smile, reaching forward from the canvass, to recognise the new relationship; while the rest looked grave, as it seemed, at the vacancy in their dwelling, and thoughts of fled posterity.

That Beauty with the cool blue pastoral drapery, and a lamb—that hung next the great bay window—with the bright yellow 'H—shire hair and eye of watchet hue—so like my Alice!—I am persuaded she was a true *Elia*—*Mildred Elia*, I take it.

Mine too, *BLAKESMOOR*, was thy noble *Marble Hall*, with its mosaic pavements, and its Twelve *Cæsars*—stately busts in marble—ranged round: of whose countenances, young reader of faces as I was, the frowning beauty of *Nero*, I remember, had most of my wonder; but the mild *Galba* had my love. There they stood in the coldness of death, yet freshness of immortality.

Mine, too, thy lofty *Justice Hall*, with its one chair of authority, high-backed and wickered, once the terror of luckless poacher, or self-forgetful maiden—so common since, that bats have roosted in it.

Mine too,—whose else—thy costly fruit-garden, with its sun-baked southern wall; the ampler pleasure-garden, rising backwards from the house in triple terraces, with flower-pots now of palest lead, save that a speck here and there, saved from the elements, bespake their pristine state to have been gilt and glittering; the verdant quarters backward still; and stretching still beyond, in old formality, the firry wilderness, the haunt of the squirrel, and the day-long murmuring woodpigeon, with that antique image in the centre, God or Goddess I wist not; but child of Athens or old Rome paid never a sincerer worship to Pan or to Sylvanus in their native groves, than I to that fragmental mystery.

Was it for this, that I kissed my childish hands too fervently in your idol worship, walks and windings of *BLAKESMOOR*! for this, or what sin of mine, has the plough passed over your pleasant places? I sometimes think that as men, when they die, do not die all, so of their extinguished habitations there may be a hope—a germ to be revived.

FINE ARTS.

British Institution.

[Continued from last week.]

'*The Lute Player*' (52), by Etty, is in that artist's most peculiar style; there is a certain vigour of colour, and a solidness about it; but it is strange and unnatural in the tint, and the physical predominates over the intellectual in all parts. Plenty is there of flesh, a look of life is in the limbs, an expression in the faces; but the flesh is coarse, the limbs are burly, even in the young girls, and the expression is sensual. Etty has a *gusto* in the physical part of his art; genuine, such as it is; but his relish

for the corporeal, is not leavened by sentiment; not even the sentiment belonging to a refined perception of the physical. The '*Nymph and Young Fawn dancing*' (200), is a better specimen of what he can do; the action of the Nymph might have been better; it is rather sprawling and ungainly; the colouring is very rich and powerful. The boy fawn is admirable, burly and glowing, with a sort of grave and ferocious jollity in his eye. We cannot admire Mr Briggs's '*Romeo and Juliet*' (65); the *Romeo* is attitudinizing to display the sculpture-like classicity of his legs, which look like stone, white, hard, and lifeless, while he coyly holds Juliet's hand between his finger and thumb, like an opera dancer. Juliet is better; but she is an English, and not an Italian girl, in Mr Briggs's picture; and there is a want of southern colour and passion in her bridal face. On the other hand, the friar has all the energy of a captain leading his men to the charge. Leaving these points of expression out of the question, the picture is a good one; for the drawing is unexceptional, and the colouring in a very fair proportion. '*Una entering the cottage of Corecca*' (80), by Hilton, we like much. The fair *Una* is most beautiful, and the purity and feminine dignity of the poet's creation most happily made apparent in the visible likeness wrought by the painter. There is, however, we think, scarcely enough evidence of weariness. The ghastly terror in the old mother, and the lubberly dread of the clownish girl, are excellent. The colour is effective and harmonious; *Una* still makes a sunshine in that shady place. '*Old Buildings on the Darro*' (96) D. Roberts, is a fine piece of reality; the light and colour are bright and happy. *Hancock* is not very fortunate in his large picture '*Warreners of former days*' (504); but a little picture of his '*The Grave*' (264), "with a female and a faithful dog mourning over it, is very touchingly designed; the moon rising behind the tomb-stone, the quiet attitude of the dog, the mysterious shade that envelopes the female, and seems to make itself a part of her mourning weeds, are all in the truest feeling of harmony of expression. Mr Howard's '*Hesperides*' is a poor affair; it is a bevy of pretty girls, standing or sitting about trees with golden apples. This said, we have told the best of the picture. It is too common a mistake to confound the merits of a picture with the merits belonging to its subject; and Mr Howard falls into this mistake. He chooses a poetical subject, and thinks he produces a poetical picture; that he is poetical *ex officio*, as it were. The pictures are prettily coloured, and his subjects are chosen for their beauty; but he seldom manages to put much meaning into his designs.

THE WEEK.

For the Birth-days of Eminent men, as long as they do not appear in our present numbers, we must refer the Reader to last year's volume. As soon as the list there is terminated, we shall resume it. In the meantime we present our Readers with a Series of Personal Portraits of such men; the first of which we take from Mr Clarke's Memoir of the Father of English Poetry.

PERSONAL PORTRAITS OF EMINENT MEN.

CHAUCEER.

The person of Chaucer was of middle stature, in advanced years inclining to corpulency. In his journey with the Pilgrims to Canterbury, mine host of the Tabard takes occasion to jest with him upon this point;—comparing both their persons, he says—

"Now, ware you, sirs, and let this man have place;
He in the waist is shaped as well as I,
This were a poppet in armes to embrace," &c.

His face was full and smooth, betokening regular good health, and a serene and cheerful frame of mind. His complexion was fair, verging towards paleness; his hair was of a dusky yellow, short and thin; that of his beard grew, or rather perhaps it was fashioned into a forked shape, and its colour was wheaten. He had an expansive and marble-like forehead, fair and unwrinkled; his eyes constantly tended towards the

ground,—a habit he has likewise given occasion in the host to notice :—

"What man art thou (quoth he),
That lookest as thou wouldst find a hare;
For ever on the ground I see thee stare?"

The general expression of his countenance combined a mixture of animation, of lurking, good-natured satire, of unruffled serenity, sweetness, and close thought. As in the above passages from his great poem we are let into a lively portrait of some of his personal peculiarities, so in the 'Testament of Love' as perfect an idea of his actions and manner in conversation are further displayed; so that one may almost fancy oneself in the prison with him, listening to his discourses on philosophy. "The downcast look (says Urry), the strict attention, the labouring thought, the hand waving for silence, the manner of address in speaking, the smooth familiar way of arguing, the respectful way of starting his objections, and, in short, every expression in that dispute, figures a lively image of him in the mind of the reader."

His features, as in most instances of sincere and transparent natures, were an index of his temper, and this comprised a mixture of the lively, grave, and modest. Yet was the gaiety of his disposition more prominent in his writings than in his general demeanour, which, it may be said, was repressed by his modesty. This bashfulness it was which gave occasion to the Countess of Pembroke often to banter him; declaring, that this absence was preferable to his conversation, since the latter was nought, on account of his reserve and distant respect; whereas, when he was away from her, the chance was, he might be preparing some composition to afford her delight. His behaviour with the pilgrims is uniformly in keeping with this habit of silence and seclusion. He scarcely appears in person, and when called upon for his tale, endeavours to avoid the task by singing a ballad; the host, however, protesting against this departure from the general compact, his own story (or rather discourse) is one of the least interesting in the whole series.

During his relaxations from the duties of public business, he continually retired to his study. Reading, indeed, was his chief delight, as appears, by his own confession, in the introduction to his 'Dream,' and to the 'Legend of Good Women.' He preferred it to every amusement, with the exception of a morning walk in May-tide. He lived almost exclusively in his own world of meditation, never interfering, as he says of himself, in the concerns of others. He was temperate and regular in his diet; he "arose with the lark, and lay down with the lamb;" hence the marvellous truth and freshness of his early morning pictures.

PETRARCH AND BOCCACCIO.

[THE following interesting passages, relative to these illustrious friends, are taken from the book mentioned in our last,—the 'Lives of Eminent Italians,'—the new volume of Dr Lardner's series. In characterizing the prominent geniuses of literature, Petrarch, for his long and passionate devotion to one object, may be styled the *Lover*; as Boccaccio, for his book of stories, and his earnest, hearty way of telling them, may be called the *Story-Teller*. There are few things more delightful to contemplate than the friendships of such extraordinary men; and the present writer of their lives has judiciously shown them in that connexion as much as possible.]

PETRARCH AND YOUNG BOCCACCIO.

The future author of the 'Decameron,' was present when Petrarch was examined by Robert King of Naples, previous to his coronation (as a poet) in the capitol. King Robert was a philosopher, a physician, and an astrologer, but hitherto he had despised poetry being only acquainted with some Sicilian rhymes, and a few of the compositions of the Troubadours. Petrarch, discovering the ignorance of his royal patron, took an opportunity, at the conclusion of his

examination (for the Laureateship) to deliver an oration in praise of poetry, setting forth its magical beauty and its beneficent influence over the minds and manners of men; and so exalted his art, that the King said, in Boccaccio's hearing, that he had never before suspected that the foolish rind of verse inclosed matter so lofty and sublime; and declared that now, in his old age, he would learn to appreciate and understand it, asking Petrarch, as an honour which he coveted, to dedicate his poem of 'Africa' to him. From this time the lover of Laura became the magnus Apollo of the more youthful Boccaccio; he named him his guide and preceptor, and became, in process of time, his most intimate friend.

BOCCACCIO'S COPY OF 'DANTE,' WRITTEN OUT BY HIMSELF FOR A GIFT TO PETRARCH.

This celebrated manuscript belongs to the Vatican Library. The epistle (written by the donor) is addressed to "Francis Petrarch, illustrious and only poet;" and is subscribed "The Giovanni da Certaldo." The manuscript is illuminated, and the arms of Petrarch, consisting of a gold bar in an azure field, with a star, adorn the head of each canto. There are a few notes of emendation, and the whole is written in a clear and beautiful hand. [Lovers of books will delight in reading of this gorgeous and fond "getting up," of a manuscript, for the purpose of making a present of it; and what sort of present! a Dante written out by a Boccaccio, to give to a Petrarch! The arms and the illuminations too, turn the book into a painting.]

BOCCACCIO, PETRARCH, AND CHAUCER.

It is a singular circumstance that one of the last acts of Petrarch was, to read the 'Decameron.' Notwithstanding his intimate friendship with the author during twenty years, Boccaccio's modesty prevented his speaking of the work, and it fell into Petrarch's hands by chance. "I have not had time," he writes to his friend, "to read the whole, so that I am not a fair judge; but it has pleased me exceedingly. Its great freedom is sufficiently excused by the age at which you wrote it, the lightness of the subject, and of the readers for whom it was destined. With many gay and laughable things are mingled many that are serious and pious. I have read principally at the beginning and end. Your description of the state of your country during the plague, appears to me very true and very pathetic. The tale at the conclusion made so lively an impression on me, that I committed it to memory, that I might sometimes relate it to my friends."

This is the story of Griselda. Petrarch translated it into Latin for the sake of those who did not understand Italian, and often read it and had it read to him. He relates, that frequently the friends who read it, broke off, interrupted by tears. Among others to whom he communicated his favourite tales, was our English poet, Chaucer, who, in his prologue to the story of Griselda, says that he

"Learned it at Padowe of a worthy clerke,
Francis Petrarch."

Chaucer had been sent ambassador to Genoa, just at this time.

PETRARCH'S INVITATION TO BOCCACCIO TO COME AND LIVE WITH HIM.

Reflect whether you cannot, as I have long wished pass the remainder of your days with me. As to your debt to me, I do not know of it, nor understand this foolish scruple of conscience. You owe me nothing except love; nor that, since each day you pay me; except, indeed, that receiving continually from me, you still continue to owe. You complain of poverty, I will not bring forward the usual consolation, nor allege the examples of illustrious men, for you know them already. I applaud you for having preferred poverty combined with independence to the riches and slavery that were offered you; but I do not praise you for refusing the solicitations of a friend. I am not able to enrich you; if I were, I should use neither words nor pen, but speak to you in deeds. But what is sufficient for one is enough for two; one house may surely suffice for those who have but one heart. Your disinclination to come injures me, and it is more injurious if you doubt my

sincerity." [In the same beautiful and sincere spirit Shelley wrote to Keats, to come and live with him in Italy; and the latter, himself a most generous man, would have ultimately joined him, had he lived. If it is wondered how such men write so finely, behold the secret! Their feelings are as real as they are rare.]

TO MY SOLITARY SNOW-DROP.

PALE maiden-flower, my rugged garden's gem!
Emblem of patient hope—safe innocence,
Drooping thy fair head o'er the fragile stem!
In yielding weakness—thy most sure defence;
Amidst mild airs—beneath illusive skies,
Promise of the young year! thou hadst thy birth
And thy first days were gentle. But there rise
Fierce winds, and kingly storms sweep o'er the
earth:
They shake thee, but cannot subdue; thy port
Is brave as meek: and still thy snowy crest
(Whence gains its thin green stem such fixed support?)
Sheds soft light o'er thy mother's gladdened breast.
Oh, let me win whilst thus I gaze on thee,
Some glimpse of peace, truth and simplicity.

J. W. D.

DIET AND MEDICINE.

Variety of medicines is the daughter of ignorance; and it is not more true, that many dishes have caused many diseases, than this is true, that many medicines have caused few cures.—Bacon.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE signature to the note sent with the remarks on Dr Smith's 'Philosophy of Health' should have been P. Y. not S. Y. The fair writer will accept our thanks for the kind expressions in her last communication.

We have faith in F. O. W. and he must have faith in us, and think the best of it, when we say that we cannot have the pleasure (at present) of availing ourselves of his kind offer. With regard to the question he asks us respecting poetry or not poetry, it is one of a sort to which we do not like to give abrupt answers. The samples might or might not be the best; and the answers might repress proper confidence or excite expectations too great in degree. There is a look of something not common in the lines sent us. The problem alluded to was proposed, we conceive, in jest.

The 'Lines for an Album' have merit; but the theology on which they turn might appear uncharitable to an age which proposes to teach rather than to condemn.

Will H. C. (Deptford) favour us with the grounds of his dissent?

The approbation of IGNORUS is very gratifying to us.

We made no objection, as our Correspondent J. G. supposes, in remarking that his Joshua's portrait by himself is a reverse, as seen in a mirror. We merely drew attention to the fact, that the painter's appearance, in propria persona, is a reverse of the portrait; and thus far, that the positive amount of resemblance is lessened. J. G. thinks the reversal a beauty. He observes, that it says as plainly as if the words were labelled on the picture, "This is the portrait of a painter, painted by himself." It does so; but would not the handling and style have been sufficient testimonies of his Joshua's autograph? When the ancient artist, calling at a friend's house, "wrote his name at Co," it consisted of a line drawn by a sweep of his brush. Nobody would have mistaken the hand of Sir Joshua, whether left or right.

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